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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* IFOR has genuine desire to cooperate with Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia, says Prosecutor; Rwandan Tribunal prepares charges against suspects who led massacres.

* Pledges for civilian police task force for Bosnia exceed authorized strength; donors will be asked if extra officers can serve with UNTAES.

* New President of Social and Economic Council says agreement made when UN was founded between rich and poor countries to cooperate on development has apparently been broken.

* Group of 77 and China says United Nations financial difficulties caused primarily by failure of Member States to pay contributions in full and on time.

* Serious political and humanitarian situation continues in Tajikistan as next round of Inter-Tajik talks begin.

* WHO Executive Board recommends destruction of smallpox virus by 1999.

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The Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Judge Richard Goldstone, said today, the Implementation Force (IFOR) would do everything it could, within the limits of its mandate and resources, to assist the Tribunal's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He told correspondents that following a recent meeting with IFOR Commander Admiral Layton Smith he was convinced there was a genuine desire to help, and when it came to practical implementation, the Tribunal would get the cooperation it needed. However, IFOR was a military operation, not a police force, and could not be expected to hunt down and arrest people guilty of criminal offenses, he said. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the authorities in Belgrade and the Croatian Government were primarily responsible for arresting and handing over people the Tribunal wanted.

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For information media—not an official record

said. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the authorities in Belgrade and the Croatian Government were primarily responsible for arresting and handing over people the Tribunal wanted.

Judge Goldstone said it might now be politically expedient for Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadic and General Ratko Mladic to be handed over to the Tribunal and there was reason for "cautious optimism" that might happen. Their diplomatic importance had waned since the Dayton Peace Agreement and there was mounting diplomatic pressure by a number of countries, particularly the United States, for the parties to implement the Dayton provisions. He said the United States was giving a much higher priority and devoting greater resources to the Tribunal's requests for information.

Regarding the Tribunal for Rwanda, Judge Goldstone said events were moving very quickly and indictments against eight people had been issued, although the warrants of arrest had yet not been executed. Indictments were also being prepared against another four people being detained by Zambia and their trials would begin within weeks of their arrest. The Belgium authorities were holding three others, the Tribunal expected to put on trial. He said if the Tribunal succeeded in trying and convicting those who led the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people in Rwanda, it would help the Government to do what politically it might not otherwise be able to do, particularly in dealing with some 60,000 detainees. Clearly, that many people could not be brought to trial by local courts in Rwanda.

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Countries have pledged more civilian police officers than needed for the United Nations International Police Task Force for Bosnia and Herzegovina, a United Nations spokesman said today. About 2,000 police officers have been promised for the Force, which has an authorized strength of 1,721.

The spokesman said contributing countries will be asked if the extra police can serve with the civilian police component of the United Nations Transitional Authority for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and (UNTAES), which has only received pledges for 60 of the 600 officers needed. Some 1,575 troops from Belgium and the Russian Federation are serving with the military component of UNTAES, which has an authorized strength of 5,000.

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The agreement for cooperation between rich and poor countries, made when the United Nations was created, had apparently been broken, according to the new President of the Economic and Social Council, Jean-Marie Kacou Gervais (Cote d'Ivoire). Addressing this year's first Council session, he wondered how many socio-political shipwrecks and ethnic-religious conflicts would be

necessary for a global move out of collective emotion and into coherent development action. How could activities be maximized "within existing resources" if resources did not exist? he asked. The roots of poverty and underdevelopment had been much studied but they had not been tackled. The work of the UN agencies must be strengthened so follow-up to the major United Nations international conferences was not blurred in red tape.

The outgoing President, Ahmad Kamal (Pakistan), said the struggle for development was becoming a losing battle. Instead of addressing the structural causes of underdevelopment there were simplistic exhortations for self-help. Attention was diverted from the real issues, such as how to ensure economic growth, regulate private financial flows, build equitable regimes covering all areas of trade, and effect technology transfers. Reform of the Council must be approached boldly and criticisms confronted head on. Was the Council addressing relevant development questions and could its deliberations be crystallized into action? he asked.

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The United Nations current financial difficulties were mainly caused by the failure of some Member States, particularly major contributors, to fulfill their Charter obligations and pay their contributions on time and in full, according to the representative of Costa Rica. He was addressing the high-level open-ended working group on the financial situation of the United Nations, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He said the question of possible revisions to the scale of assessments could not be linked to the payment of arrears, which should be settled soon, so that the UN could return to financial solvency.

The Group of 77 and China believed the capacity to pay remained a fundamental principle, however some developing countries were assessed at the floor rate of the scale, far beyond their capacity to pay. The floor rate should be revised downwards. The differentiation in assessing contributions to the peace-keeping budget was imperative, and the relative capacity of more developed Members to pay larger amounts than the less developed countries was based on economic reality.

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There was a serious political and humanitarian situation in Tajikistan, a United Nations spokesman said today, as delegations from the Tajik Government and opposition arrived in Ashkabad, Turkmenistan for the continual round of inter-Tajik talks.

The talks to achieve a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict are being guided by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, the spokesman said. There are 40 observers serving with the United Nations Military Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT).

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The Executive Board of the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended the destruction of remaining stocks of the smallpox (variola) virus, currently held in the Russian Federation and the United States, by 30 June 1999. The last known natural case of smallpox was detected in Somalia in 1977, and in 1980, the disease became the first to be eradicated. Less than 30 years ago, smallpox was endemic in 31 countries, striking 10 to 15 million people a year and killing 2 million. Survivors were disfigured or blinded for life.

The remaining smallpox virus stocks are kept by WHO at the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia in the United States and at the Russian State Research Centre of Virology and Biotechnology, Koltsovo, Novosibirsk Region. The Board also recommended that 500,000 doses of smallpox vaccine and the seed virus (vaccinia virus strain Lister Elstree) be maintained.

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Please note that the last paragraph of the item on MINURSO of 23 January, page 3, should have read "The Secretary-General said his Special Envoy, Chinmaya Gharekhan, had told both parties of the Council's frustration at breakdowns in the identification process and the lack of a reasonably clear indication of when it might end, and its willingness to contemplate the Mission's withdrawal. The Acting Special Representative, Erik Jensen, will address other aspects of the settlement plan, such as the code of conduct, confinement of troops and exchange of prisoners-of-war.

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